

How New York's Famous Symbol Affects Folk

CIVIC VIRTUE, New York's widely discussed, symbolic monument, is just beginning to emerge from the stress of argument.

A hundred years ago the most interesting gathering place for New York's idle and curious was the Bowling Green, where it was customary to sit on uncomfortable benches and discuss the artistic inelegance of the iron fence.

Somewhat later, similar interest, artistic and argumentative, was focused upon the architectural ornaments to the Battery. It seems now that New York, which embraces the daily visitors from North, South and West, spends at least a part of its time in both silent and vocative speculation upon the new MacMonnies fountain in City Hall Park.

And the comments which are passed upon this so widely discussed work of art certainly are much more frank and

looked like the essence of philosophy, like some modern Plato.

A man with tortoise rimmed eye-glasses was impressed with the aspect of his seat mate. "What do you think of it?" he asked.

"I ain't no artist," replied the bearded benchman. "I'm a vegetarian."

A strenuous school teacher from up-State, with fifteen pupils brought to town to look at the fish in the Aquarium, felt that the opportunity to see the statue should not be lost. She began a vivid and moral explanation.

"Now look, boys," she began. "He's rising up from wickedness. He's standing for right. Those women are the evil influences. That wreck of a ship shows what he's had to fight against, but what does he care for defeat? See, Willie, that's the same as your long division. That figurehead of victory overturned only

officer. The pragmatic gentleman looked hurt. He stepped back. But the policeman's eyes were on other scenes, and he was saying:

"That fountain's not no marathon track. It's a statue, see!" The small boy he was addressing leaped down from the fountain and scurried away. The pragmatic gentleman, with an expression of having been left hanging in midair, retreated.

A pair of newlyweds completed his chagrin by holding up their

Much Discussed "Civic Virtue" Draws Varied Comment From Critics of All Sorts; Some Stay to Admire, Others Cast Fleeting Glances and Run Away; Flapper and Matron Have Opposing Views

probably already has a girl. He may be sort of a 'diamond in the rough,' but he's a diamond, girls. Can't you see it? He's the kind of chap who'd refuse to break an engagement with one girl if he fell in love with another. He'd keep all his pledges and buy orchestra seats."

"As for me," said the blond who had spoken first, "he could keep his orchestra seats. He couldn't vamp me in a million years. I hate curly haired men, to begin with. And besides, he looks terribly egotistic."

This conversation was unlike another.

to make me mad when I was in Washington the way those Senators and Reps went out to ball games after the roll call and forgot to work on big questions, like New York harbor. Now—"

An interruption came like the proverbial bolt from the blue:

"Are you talking artistics or are you talking politics?" demanded the salesman. "Because if you get me riled up on politics I'm likely to pull some of this Civic Virtue-caveman stuff myself."

"I'm telling you what's wrong with the country that makes us need statues like this," said the other. "Now I did some work for Josephus Daniels—"

"What I want to know is," said the salesman, growing irate, but still interested, "how that fellow stands up



They came from North, South and West, as well as from town—and each regards the MacMonnies work with different thoughts."

cosmopolitan than the various findings "for and against" of the sedate art critics whose views have been so widely heralded.

"Sure they talk about it," said the policeman. "They can't get enough of the guy. They come all the time." He surveyed a scattered circle of some 150 persons of many kinds and pursuits, all interested in the huge statue.

"Some like it, some don't," he said. "Humph," said a boy to his companion. "Look at that guy's big toe. Say, kid, he could tow your canoe in with it."

On a bench sat a somewhat inebriated gentleman, looking as intently as he could at the C. V. He addressed a remark into space:

"They've carved John L. Sullivan. Got 'im set up in the park." He waved his arms feebly, in a salute as to an idol of his youth.

A mild-eyed little man, with a heavy gold chain, agreed with the admirer of John L.

"Natural as nature," he said to his buxom wife. "Wonderful muscles. Strength there."

A park employee stopped to suggest: "Purty fair sculping, eh?"

A tall young man, with a Piccadilly accent, pointed with his cane at the face and then at the body.

"Rotten taste," he said, "the chap's got a cherub face on a blacksmith's shoulders."

Two young stenographers, "would-be highbrows," overheard the remark. When a third girl joined them, one said: "He's got a baby face."

"No expression," added the second girl. A cheerful cynic observed two youths of the "fresh" university type pausing petulantly with notebooks to get material for a class essay on art.

"Cheer, cheer, the gang's all here," he chanted, turning from the faces of the two youths to that of the statue.

"The really fine idea of the thing," a tall clubwoman with a fine lace ruche explained to a round-cheeked shopping companion, who was a little awed by the white beauty of the figure, "is that virtue does triumph. We women, with our clubs and our civic committees, are helping establish virtue."

The ringleader in a miniature "gang" engaged in swapping ball bearings out of roller skates halted to rest his youthful eyes on the fountain group.

"Gee whiz," he remarked. "Look at the guy smashin' the ladies' neck. Boy, them ropes around him ain't no good at all, at all. Dempsey wouldn't git nowhere with him."

A woman in the quiet garb of a Catholic religious order examined the figure.

"See, from this side," she said to her companion recluse, "from this side, that sword of law over his shoulder looks like an angel's wing."

A long bearded man sat morosely on a bench, contemplating the world with an eye that had a baleful gleam in it. He

spurred him on. Below are the torn shreds of—

"My pants," broke in one of the boys. "I ripped 'em on the bench."

After the retreat in search of a tailor a loquacious and pragmatic gentleman who knew all about art came up and took the space deserted by the overburdened school teacher. He surveyed the scene with a supercilious air.

"Art," he began, addressing the policeman, "is not supposed to be what you think or what I think is good, but what the artist thinks is good. It may or may not be, you see. The important thing is that the artist is expressing beauty in his own way and as he reacts to life."

"You might, for instance," he proceeded, grasping the lapel of the blue coat, "react one way when you saw a camel. I might react another way. It all depends. I might think of one thing and you—"

"Come off, come off," interposed the

baby for a better judgment of the work, just as they passed in front of him.

"See booful man!" implored the infant's mother.

The child burst into tears. "Let's get perspective, perspective," begged the dark-haired youth. "That's the way to look at statues."

A sailor on shore leave saved a weather eye for pretty girls as he took in the sight.

"Some big boy, all right," he said to a faded old woman with a shawl around her head.

"Yes, ain't he big and handsome?" she responded.

A stenographer, very businesslike, was too important to the universe, herself and to the life of the city to be disturbed by a mere statue, yet she allowed her head to lift once to view the marble majesty, then hurried on.

Feeling safe in numbers, a triumvirate of flappers, hats jaunty and shoulders

touching one another, hazarded a long look.

Giggling and not altogether sure of the propriety of the whole affair, they made their comment after a silent examination of the group, particularly the face and figure of "Civic Virtue" himself.

"Good night!" said one.

"Say, woman," said another, turning to the one who spoke first, "you don't know nothin' yet. He looks like a millionaire's son to me. Say, he's the laddie who'd blow you for a trip in a Rolls Royce, with twenty stops for the merry old hot dogs and Russian salad."

"Whoops, my dear," squealed the third. "Do you think 'Civic Virtue' is a millionaire?"

"You see," she went on, "he's very poor. I've made up my own story about him. He's unhappy and poor, but honest. He believes in his country and he

also being carried on by two pretty, but rather sedate girls at another angle from the figure."

"Oh, yes," said one. "I know its supposed to be fine. But I never could see the idea of such frankness. Why not save such things for the art galleries. Look at those women!"

A drummer, in town for the day, remarked to no one in particular: "Say, he's not strong for the women, is he?"

He sought a better view. "Now that one with that skeleton in her hand; she ain't the kind that'd hurt your eyes."

He was joined in a moment by a chap who had, it developed, helped run the Navy during the war. He mentioned his work in Washington several times.

"They got some good stuff like this in Washington," he said, "swell stuff. Gen. Grant on a horse and all that. It used

there listening to all this chatter and keeps his temper."

Bumping their bag between them, a couple visiting New York dashed out of the subway, took a look and dashed back again.

"That's it," said the man while they hesitated between dashes.

"Say, they make everything big in New York, don't they?" said the woman.

"C'm'on," said he, "we got the 'Tower' to do yet."

A scholarly old man, sitting in the park every day, enjoying the companionship of many other idlers, now and then looks up at the fountain with reminiscence in his eyes.

"Do you know," he said to a youth with a cap pulled over one eye, who sat next to him, "do you know, human achievement is a great thing! But human beings are greater!"

"No, I don't know nothing of the kind, nor nothing else," replied the youth. "All I know is the people who come here make me sick! The guy who carved that thing couldn't make me a gravestone!"

A rather cute little girl, with very short dresses, came up, stopped a moment and hurried away. She had not stopped to look at the statue at all, it developed, but just to meet a young man with whom she had a "date."

A rather distinguished gentleman, appearing somehow out of place in comparison to all the others, strolled idly up to the railing, swinging his cane.

He stood for a moment looking at the back of the fountain.

"Ain't it awful?" said a pert young person, who had crowded in next to him. The distinguished gentleman looked around at her, the trace of a smile at the corners of his lips. But she was not speaking to him. She was talking to a clean cut young man upon whose arm she was leaning. And the young man was replying:

"No—I think it is splendid." They turned and went away, the distinguished looking gentleman watching them—the smile gone now. Another man, who crowded into the place vacated, spoke to him:

"What do you think about it?"

"Oh, I'm content to leave it to the two who just passed judgment," said the stranger with the cane as he walked idly away. Just then an elderly woman, evidently a clubwoman, stopped suddenly behind the other man. She clutched at the arm of a girl, evidently her daughter, and exclaimed:

"Look! there goes MacMonnies, the sculptor himself!"

Asking Mr. Bok for A Circus Job—An Open Letter

Mr. Edward Bok,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Bok:

As I see you are giving an Exhibition or Fair in your city in the near future, I thought I would write you in regards to the same.

Although I completed my education in our local High School last February, we should keep on learning something every day or so, as you tell us in your book.

Hence I thought I would like to learn about your Exhibition.

It is too bad Mr. Hoover will not consent to manage it for you, as he would be a very first class as well as popular manager.

Still there are others, Mr. Bok. If you showed me the Salary you showed him, you would not see me shrinking back like a blushing Violet, I hope.

I may be modest, as my friends all say, but I am not shy like that.

A good man should not hide his lights under a bush, I always think. When Opportunity knocks he should rush out and get a Head Lock on it.

Now, Mr. Bok, far be it from me to sink to Flattery. But I have read your Autobiography, and I guess you are as big a man as Hoover any day, if you would only own up.

So if I were you I would run the Exhibition myself and show them.

And then if you found the vast undertaking too vast for an Old Timer, you could call in a young man of Push and Vim and let him take over some of the Ornerous Details.

I once thought of going into the Show Business myself. There was a circus came to our town and needed a capable young man to look after the Lion.

The last man who looked after the Lion had mys-

teriously disappeared. He was a Turk.

The Lion seemed under the weather for some reason. He kept gasping for Air.

The Circus people made me a very attractive offer, but when I saw the Lion yawn I did not like the looks of the Opening.

I decided I was too young and tender to go into the Show Business.

I am two years older now, however, and I must confess your Exhibition sounds pretty good, as far as I have been able to hear.

An Upright young man taking part in your undertaking could rightly feel that he was taking part in an undertaking that was at once Educational and at the same time Uplifting.

I suppose, Mr. Bok, you will have a Midway or a Streets of Cairo at your Fair to interest the Unthinking who think of only Pleasure.

If so, I might be induced to take that end of the work off your hands.

This would leave you free to look after serious matters such as Agricultural Hall and the Horse Races.

I don't know as you will agree with me, but I think we ought to be pretty Select about what we show the public in our Side Show Division.

Between now and the Grand Opening I could be going on trips for you to Coney Island and such points, and gathering points and Ideas for you about various Attractions for our Exhibition.

I could scout around in this way and thus be sure we did not sign up some Attraction that would be undesirable from a Quaker standpoint.

I believe the public will patronize Refined Entertainment if they can't get anything else.

So if you would like an able assistant to help you

along the line I mention, just drop me a line and I will drop over to Confer with you.

It may interest you, Mr. Bok, to know that I am of Dutch Extraction like yourself.

My great-grandfather on my mother's side was the leading Dentist of the town of Hoofdsplaat.

His son, Hans Van Dam, distinguished himself at the age of 10 by holding his finger in a hole in a dyke all one stormy night, thus saving his native land from the Sea.

Many is the time I have sat on my grandfather's knee and heard him tell about it.

His brave act was praised by the newspapers at the time. The publicity was unpleasant, however, for my people, who have always been noted for their modesty.

So the whole Van Dam family except Grandpa's eldest brother Erasmus left Hoofdsplaat and came to America. Erasmus, who stayed behind, settled at Hoedekenskeike and later invented the Holland Submarine Boat, with which you are doubtless familiar.

So you and I will have many mutual subjects to chat about when I drop over to see you in regards to accepting a position with your Exhibition.

You will pardon me for introducing family matters into a business letter, I trust.

Let me now close, Mr. Bok, by wishing you all Success in your Exhibition.

If you find you need an associate in the management who is young and ambitious as well as a Live Wire, do not hesitate to send me a wire.

I would be proud to be associated with you, rest assured. Cordially yours,

HOMER BALMY.

P. S.—They call Philadelphia a slow town, but we will show them.

H. B.